**MYTH OR FACT?**

"Juvenile sex offenders typically are victims of child sexual abuse and grow up to be adult sex offenders."

**MYTH!!!!**

**Fact:** Multiple factors, not just sexual victimization as a child, are associated with the development of sexually offending behavior in youth.

Recent studies show that rates of physical and sexual abuse vary widely for adolescent sex offenders; 20 to 50% of these youth experienced physical abuse and approximately 40 to 80% experienced sexual abuse.

While many adolescents who commit sexual offenses have histories of being abused, the majority of these youth do not become adult sex offenders. Research suggests that the age of onset and number of incidents of abuse, the period of time elapsing between the abuse and its first report, perceptions of how the family responded to the disclosure of abuse, and exposure to domestic violence all are relevant to why some sexually abused youths go on to sexually perpetrate while others do not.

**MYTH OR FACT?**

"Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers."

**MYTH!!!**

**Fact:** Most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim or the victim's family, regardless of whether the victim is a child or an adult.

**MYTH OR FACT?**

"Youths do not commit sex offenses."

**MYTH!!**

**Fact:** Adolescents are responsible for a significant number of rape and child molestation cases each year.

Sexual assaults committed by youth are a growing concern in this country. Currently, it is estimated that adolescents (ages 13 to 17) account for up to one-fifth of all rapes and one- half of all cases of child molestation committed each year

**MYTH OR FACT?**

"Treatment for adolescent sex offenders is ineffective."

**MYTH!!**

**Fact:** Adolescent treatment programs can contribute to community safety because those who attend and cooperate with program conditions are less likely to re-offend than those who never receive treatment intervention.

Characteristics Of Adolescent Sex Offenders:

* 20-50% have histories of physical abuse
* 30-60% exhibit learning disabilities and academic dysfunction
* 40-80% have histories of sexual abuse
* Adolescent sex offenders are typically between the ages of 13 and 17
* Many have difficulties with impulse control and judgment
* They are generally male
* Up to 80% have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder
* Because experience to date indicates that sexually abusive behaviors develop steadily over time, early intervention is clearly needed.